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# Twenty-ninth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

## I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2190 (2014), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2015 and requested me to keep it informed of the situation on the ground and the implementation of the mandate of UNMIL. The present report provides an update on major developments since my report of 15 August 2014 (S/2014/598) and letter to the President of the Security Council dated 28 August 2014 (S/2014/644), regarding the impact of the Ebola virus disease on Liberia.

## II. Major developments

### A. Political situation

2. The reporting period was dominated by the Ebola outbreak, a national tragedy that claimed 4,353 Liberian lives, infected a reported 9,798 persons, and deprived 3,035 children of one or both parents between March 2014 and March 2015. Initially a medical emergency, the outbreak became more complex as it escalated in August 2014, with political, security, humanitarian and economic implications that were significant and likely to be long-lasting. The epidemic revealed the depth of public distrust and weaknesses in national institutions, while also accentuating societal divisions. As a result, political and other reform processes slowed, although new opportunities for cooperation arose, including with respect to empowering local authorities.

3. On 6 August, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf declared a 90-day state of emergency, noting that the spread of Ebola posed risks to the health, stability, security and welfare of the nation. The Legislature approved the state of emergency, and later authorized the release of $20 million to combat the outbreak. On 11 August, the President suspended all travel by government officials for 30 days and instructed officials abroad to return to Liberia within a week. On 19 August, the President announced additional extraordinary measures, including the imposition of a nationwide curfew and the quarantine of specific areas.

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4. There were also several changes to the Cabinet during the reporting period. On 6 October, the Minister of Justice, Christiana Tah, announced her resignation, alleging political interference with her investigation into fraud allegations against the National Security Agency, which is headed by the President's step-son. Further changes were subsequently made, including the nomination on 7 April of new ministers of health and education.

5. The Ebola outbreak affected the timing of elections for 15 of the 30 senators, originally scheduled for 14 October in accordance with the Constitution. Electoral activities were formally suspended by the President in October. Following broad consultations, the National Elections Commission proposed postponing the elections until mid-December, while suspending elections in counties heavily affected by the epidemic. The Legislature endorsed this proposal, but decided that elections should go forward in all counties. On 19 November, the President issued a statement noting the selection by the National Elections Commission of 16 December as the new election day.

6. Electoral activities were again suspended on 28 November at the order of the Supreme Court, which had received three separate petitions from a political party, a group of prominent citizens, and a civil society organization, all seeking to postpone the elections until the post-Ebola period. Meanwhile, on 4 December, the President issued executive order No. 65 prohibiting large gatherings in Monrovia in view of the Ebola risk, days after a massive turnout for the launch of the campaign of former presidential candidate George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change. The order was widely criticized as being motivated by political rather than health concerns. The Supreme Court suspended the order on 6 December. On 13 December, the Court dismissed the petitions. Following further consultations with stakeholders, the National Elections Commission set 20 December as the date for the elections. Notwithstanding some controversy about holding elections in the midst of the health emergency, political stakeholders reached consensus on the need to conduct the elections by the end of the year, in order to avoid a possible constitutional crisis that could arise if the new Senators were not seated on 12 January, as provided by the Constitution.

7. One of the most closely watched contests was for the senatorial seat in Montserrado County, which hosts nearly a third of the electorate, as the race pitted Mr. Weah against Robert Sirleaf, one of the President's sons and former head of the National Oil Company of Liberia, who ran as an independent candidate. On 26 November, violent clashes in Monrovia between the supporters of Messrs. Sirleaf and Weah resulted in several injuries and property damage. The Congress for Democratic Change also accused the police of harassing Mr. Weah.

8. The elections were held on 20 December with a low voter turnout of 25.2 per cent. The elections were assessed as generally free, fair and credible, and were conducted peacefully, despite the political tensions and incidents of pre-election violence. Throughout the election process, UNMIL engaged with political stakeholders at all levels to stress the importance of peaceful and transparent elections, while also adhering to Ebola prevention measures. The National Elections Commission announced final election results on 27 December. Mr. Weah won the Montserrado County seat by a significant margin, taking 78 per cent of the vote compared to 10.8 per cent for Mr. Sirleaf, the runner-up. Of 12 incumbents seeking re-election, only the former faction leader, Prince Johnson, of Nimba County and

the former First Lady, Jewel Howard Taylor, of Bong County were elected. Ms. Taylor was also the only successful female candidate, lowering the number of female senators to 3 out of 30. Funds dedicated to supporting women's participation in the senatorial election had been redirected to the Ebola response. Of the 102 members of the Legislature, 11 are women. The women's legislative caucus developed a three-year plan aimed at supporting women's participation in the 2017 elections.

9. Allegations of electoral irregularities were generally addressed peacefully, through recourse to administrative and judicial mechanisms. Electoral litigation was extensive: challenges, including those which delayed the certification of three winners, were brought before the National Elections Commission in 12 counties and there were subsequent appeals before the Supreme Court in six races. As at 15 April, two cases were still pending before the Commission and one before the Supreme Court. On 3 January, the National Elections Commission certified 12 of the 15 newly-elected senators, who took the oath of office and presented their credentials to the 53rd Legislature on 12 January. On 12 February, the Senate elected Armah Jallah of Gbarpolu County as President pro tempore of the Senate, following the defeat of the incumbent at the polls.

10. In January, following a corruption allegation against the leadership of the House of Representatives, minority opposition members demanded that the Speaker step down pending an investigation by the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission. In denying allegations by House opponents that he circumvented public procurement laws in relation to a $25,000 consulting fee, and declining to appear before the Commission, the Speaker triggered statements from the Commission confirming that an investigation was under way into those fees as well as into the expenditure of $1.2 million allegedly provided for public consultations on draft petroleum legislation in 2013. The House subsequently summoned the Commission to report on its expenditure covering the fiscal years 2012 to 2015. The Deputy Speaker has yet to appear before the Commission and the matter remains pending.

11. Media allegations of widespread corruption, including alleged misuse of funds allocated to the fight against Ebola, contributed to the erosion of public trust in the Government. On 23 February, a former member of the House of Representatives and eight former board members and employees of the National Oil Company of Liberia, including a newly-elected senator, were charged with alleged payment of bribes to members of the House of Representatives to ratify contracts involving the National Oil Company of Liberia in 2006 and 2007. The President, during her annual address to the Legislature on 26 January, reaffirmed her intention to propose a specialized criminal court with jurisdiction over corruption crimes, as well as her support for providing the Commission with direct prosecutorial powers. The public and many political parties expressed scepticism about the political will to combat corruption.

12. In her annual address, the President also reiterated the pledge she made in 2014 when signing the Declaration of Table Mountain regarding the decriminalization of media offences. There were, however, several incidents of intimidation of journalists and the media during the period under review, triggering national and international censure. On 14 August, the Liberia National Police shut down the *National Chronicle* newspaper and arrested two of its staff, three days after their coverage of a citizens' demonstration against the state of emergency. As

at 15 April 2015, the newspaper remains closed. On 7 February, a radio journalist, Henry Costa, was arrested for allegedly violating the curfew, and was subsequently released following a criminal court hearing on a writ filed against the State for arbitrary detention. On 4 September 2014, and again on 8 February 2015, the Press Union of Liberia publicly condemned actions of the Government inconsistent with its legal obligations to protect the freedom of the press, citing the forced closure of media outlets, as well as the alleged arbitrary arrest or other harassment of journalists, including Helen Nah of the *Women Voices* newspaper, who claimed that she was targeted after writing about police corruption.

## B. National reconciliation, political reforms and governance

13. There has been little progress on the National Reconciliation Roadmap and in the implementation of related projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund since my last report. The attention of community groups previously engaged in reconciliation activities was diverted to supporting the Ebola response; limited government resources and expertise also hindered progress.

14. Some progress was made on the Palava Hut ethnographic study, with the development of operational guidelines for truth-telling and dispute resolution processes consistent with practice across Liberia's ethnic groups. The Land Commission also recorded some advances in its land policy programme and law reforms. Draft acts on land rights and a new land authority are under review by the Legislature and the Cabinet, respectively. To facilitate temporary improvements in land management pending the passage of those laws, on 16 January the President issued three executive orders establishing a wetlands task force, extending the Land Commission's mandate for one year, and extending the suspension of the sale of public land.

15. The successful mobilization of communities, local authorities and civil society was critical to fighting Ebola. Civil society organizations and community leaders, with support from other actors, including UNMIL, played a pivotal role in localized incident management mechanisms, achieving significant changes in hygiene and traditional burial practices, as well as improving information flow, all of which contributed to the Ebola response. This local engagement encouraged closer interaction between previously factionalized communities, strengthened confidence and community engagement with public officials and security agencies, and facilitated the participation of women. Such structures are being used for the post-Ebola revival of the National Reconciliation Roadmap, with support from the United Nations country team.

16. In order to overcome the constraints of centralized financial management and decision-making structures, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has released since August approximately $1.9 million in development and Ebola response funds directly to the counties to supply medical facilities and meet other community needs. The Government also enabled county superintendents to directly coordinate the medical response with local partners, including efforts aimed at overcoming resistance to Ebola containment measures. Building on these achievements and progressing towards the implementation of certain Government commitments from 2012, on 18 February, the President launched the national Deconcentration Platform,

which directed superintendents to coordinate some operations of ministries, agencies and commissions deployed to the counties.

17. The constitutional review process continued, with UNMIL stressing the importance of inclusivity and civic education. On 9 February, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection launched a gender technical working group to mainstream gender perspectives into the constitutional review. From 30 March to 2 April, a national constitutional conference bringing together some 500 delegates from across the country voted publicly on 25 issues, arising from public consultations held in 2014, which they expect to be considered when amending the 1986 Constitution. The conference was marked by protests from various interest groups, who claimed their views had been excluded. Following mediation by members of the Constitution Review Committee and the preventive deployment of the Liberia National Police and UNMIL formed police units, the conference proceeded, the majority of delegates supporting proposals including equal gender representation in the governance system, women's inheritance rights, indigenous people's land ownership rights and natural resources benefits, and the election of local authorities. In addition, proposals to amend the tenure and powers of the three branches of government, affirm the existing constitutional provision imposing race and origin requirements for citizenship, and characterizing Liberia as a Christian nation were overwhelmingly supported by delegates. On 6 April, a joint statement was issued by several political parties, rejecting the outcome of the constitutional conference, citing various violations, including of the right to vote by secret ballot. The amendments to the Constitution proposed by the Constitutional Review Committee will require the concurrence of the Legislature and ratification in a national referendum.

18. Following repeated demands from the Legislature for the National Ebola Task Force to account for the spending of response funds, as well as critical reports from the Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force based on that coalition's field assessments, on 7 April the General Auditing Commission submitted its audit to the Senate on Ebola Task Force disbursements from some bank accounts. The report, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2014, assesses payments made to entities totalling approximately $13 million. Financial irregularities of some $850,000 were outlined, including payments to a public relations firm, security agencies and the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs. The Auditor General encouraged the Senate to urgently consider the recommendations. During 2014, the General Auditing Commission published 21 audits of public entities, and the Legislature submitted five reports to the President based on previous audits recommending action on identified discrepancies.

19. From August 2014 to March 2015, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission submitted seven cases to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution; the Ministry issued an indictment in one, while the Commission initiated steps to take another two to court directly. As noted in paragraph 11 above, one of the cases involved allegations of bribes paid to the Legislature by former officials of the National Oil Company of Liberia. The other cases involved allegations against a former official at the Liberia Telecommunications Authority and a current official at the Ministry of Public Works. None of those cases has gone to trial.

## C. Security situation

20. The overall security situation remained stable though fragile. Insecurity was characterized by incidents related to the application of extraordinary measures following the declaration of a state of emergency in response to the Ebola crisis; tensions between concessionaires and affected communities; as well as election-related and inter-communal violence.

21. As indicated, public discontent regarding measures taken to address and contain Ebola and the response of security forces led to tensions and violence. On 16 August, residents of the densely populated West Point neighbourhood in Monrovia broke into an Ebola treatment facility and looted and destroyed equipment, protesting against the establishment of the facility in the area without consultation with the community, and alleging that the virus was a government ploy to attract funding from the international community. On 20 August, during a confrontation with local youths, security forces enforcing a quarantine of the community resorted to excessive force, shooting dead 15-year-old Shaki Kamara and injuring at least two other civilians.

22. On 4 March, some 200 demonstrators blocked a main road in Zorzor, Lofa County, to protest at the death of a woman of the Loma ethnic group, who they alleged had been killed by a suspect of the Mandingo ethnic group. A house and a shop owned by a member of the Mandingo community were burned down, reportedly by members of the Loma community. The Liberia National Police imposed a curfew in the Zorzor area, while UNMIL military and police deployed to monitor the scene. Tensions were eased through local mediation conducted by the Lofa County Peace Committee, formed and funded by the Government and comprising chiefs, elders, women, young people and other civil society groups, which organized reconciliation meetings between leaders of the Loma and Mandingo communities. The curfew was lifted on 9 March.

## D. Regional issues

23. The situation in the area bordering Côte d'Ivoire remained generally stable, notwithstanding reported attacks in Côte d'Ivoire near the Liberian border early in 2015. While cross-border engagement across the respective borders was suspended because of government-imposed border closures in July 2014, cooperation in a number of areas progressively resumed from January 2015.

24. On 20 February, the President announced the reopening of the main border crossing points, effective 22 February, including the implementation of health protocols to prevent the further spread of Ebola throughout the country and neighbouring countries. However, as at 15 April the Côte d'Ivoire borders with Guinea and Liberia remained closed. This followed the endorsement on 15 February by the Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union of a comprehensive regional health strategy to prevent the cross-border transmission of infectious diseases and promote post-Ebola socioeconomic recovery. The development of the strategy was led by the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), together with the World Health Organization, UNMIL and other international Ebola response partners.

25. On 27 and 28 February, a cross-border meeting was held of representatives of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in Lofa County, with the participation of local government officials, health actors, community and traditional leaders, and women and youth representatives. The meeting highlighted the need to engage communities and increase cross-border cooperation to reach zero Ebola cases as a subregion.

26. On 10 March, the third Quadripartite Meeting involving the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire was held in Abidjan. Both Governments acknowledged that, despite overall improvements, the security situation in the border regions remains fragile. The parties reiterated the need to reinforce their cooperation through regular cross-border meetings, confidence-building measures, and information-sharing between their respective security agencies. Both Governments also agreed to hold the sixth session of the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation, following many years of dormancy, and the second Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meeting in April and May, respectively.

## E. Humanitarian issues

27. As at 31 March, Liberia was hosting 38,121 registered Ivorian refugees, 29,358 of them in camps and 8,763 in host communities. Throughout the period under review, the facilitated voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees was suspended at the request of Côte d'Ivoire, as an Ebola preventive measure. On 12 March, the Tripartite Commission comprising the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees agreed to resume repatriation activities. Some 8,000 refugees have expressed interest in immediately returning.

28. Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1509 (2003) establishing UNMIL and 2190 (2014) extending its mandate, UNMIL facilitated the provision of humanitarian assistance in the context of the Ebola outbreak, including by leveraging its logistics capacities. UNMIL led an inter-agency logistics team based at the Ministry of Health which transported thousands of tons of medical supplies, prepared the ground for three Ebola treatment centres and other engineering work for the National Ebola Command Centre, among other contributions, including expanding its outreach and public information activities to further Ebola awareness. UNMIL field offices assisted local officials to coordinate their response efforts, resulting in the establishment of Ebola task forces in all 15 counties, and implemented quick-impact projects that provided immediate, necessary Ebola response resources and materials. In addition, UNMIL supported the establishment of UNMEER, and coordinated closely with that mission's activities.

29. Under the leadership of the Government and in coordination with the African Development Bank, the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, a national Ebola recovery assessment was conducted in January to identify critical areas that would spearhead economic and social recovery in the post-Ebola period and inform national recovery plans. The identified priority areas include restoration of an improved and sustainable health care system; decentralized basic services delivery; improved livelihoods; free access to education and health services; disaster risk reduction and preparedness; macro-credit and micro and small enterprises support; small infrastructure upgrades and hygiene promotion campaigns. An

analysis of the impact of the epidemic on women and girls revealed that women's economic activities, income and livelihoods and maternal health care were most affected by the Ebola crisis.

30. On 24 February, the House of Representatives approved a bill establishing a national disaster management agency with responsibility for the development and implementation of disaster management policies and systems that would address issues such as resource mobilization and the implementation of vulnerability reduction programmes. The bill is awaiting Senate concurrence.

31. In November 2014, the United Nations country team resumed the implementation of a Trust Fund for Human Security project to provide support for social cohesion and reconciliation, income generation, food security, protection and health care to the most vulnerable populations of south-eastern Liberia, in order to contribute to long-term stabilization in the border area with Côte d'Ivoire.

## F. Human rights situation

32. The human rights situation was characterized by concerns arising from the state of emergency, including incidents of mistreatment, use of excessive force, illegal detention, extortion by security personnel and restriction of press freedoms, as well as continuing challenges related to sexual and gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices.

33. Following the inquiry into the incident in the West Point neighbourhood on 20 August, described in paragraph 21 above, the Armed Forces of Liberia held administrative hearings and imposed disciplinary actions against five military personnel. While the President called on the Independent National Commission on Human Rights to further investigate the incident, there was no criminal investigation, underlining the need for the adoption of the Liberian uniform code of military justice and development of the capacity to implement it to address the accountability deficit with regard to the army.

34. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights continued to be plagued by internal weaknesses and funding challenges, compounded by the absence of internal governance procedures or a strategic plan to strengthen its capacity, including mechanisms for handling public complaints and engaging effectively in critical processes such as constitutional reform. In the wake of the West Point incident, the Commission issued a report with recommendations on actions to be taken by the Government. However, the report failed to highlight major human rights issues and fell short of recommending clear criminal accountability for human rights violations committed by security agencies. The Commission maintained its human rights monitors in the field through interim financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund, but steps have yet to be taken to include the monitors' cost in the government payroll.

35. UNMIL continued to monitor and report on human rights violations throughout the country during the Ebola outbreak, and undertook advocacy initiatives, particularly those aimed towards equal health care access. In addition, a protection cluster focused on child protection, gender, gender-based violence, rule of law and vulnerable groups and mainstreaming protection, gender and HIV in the

Ebola response was established in October, comprising relevant government agencies, humanitarian and development actors and the United Nations.

36. Initiatives to support the implementation of the five-year national human rights action plan continued during the reporting period, with the ongoing process of establishing human rights focal points at ministries and with the development of a strategy to coordinate treaty reporting by the Government. On 16 February, the Government, with UNMIL support, submitted to the Human Rights Council its second universal periodic review report on the overall human rights situation in Liberia. The report covered the period 2010 to 2014, and included an update on recommendations from its first report with respect to the abolition of the death penalty, as well as combating female genital mutilation and sexual and gender-based violence.

37. The Ministry of Internal Affairs issued several circulars designed to mitigate harmful traditional practices, although cases of rape, female genital mutilation, and forced enrolment into secret societies continued to be reported, with inadequate responses from law enforcement authorities. The number of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence remains high, the majority of reported cases involving minors. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection noted 1,392 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence in 2014, of which 720 were rape cases, including gang rape. Five children involved in those cases have died, while only one alleged perpetrator has been arrested. The Government, the United Nations and partners continued to emphasize the importance of addressing sexual and gender-based violence at the grass-roots level by engaging communities in changing social norms and holding perpetrators accountable.

## G. Economic situation

38. Economic growth fell from the projected 5.9 per cent in 2014 to 1 per cent, as a result of the steep decline in economic activity and investment due to Ebola. From August 2014, approximately 80 per cent of airlines suspended flights and 93 per cent of concessionaires either suspended or reduced their operations. The services, mining, trade and agriculture sectors were among those hardest hit by the epidemic and by the sharp drop in global prices of some export commodities. Non-performing loans have increased, revenue has declined, and inflation has reached double digits. On 27 February, the International Monetary Fund announced it had provided Liberia with some $130 million in new financing and debt relief from October 2014, including $36.5 million in debt relief from the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. However, the most economically vulnerable were severely affected. Before the crisis, 64 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line; this significantly increased during the crisis as families struggled with food insecurity and the substantial loss of wages and self-employment activities due to decreased activity in the private sector. In February, some 40 per cent of household heads who were working before the crisis were still unemployed.

39. On 26 November, the President approved the national budget for fiscal year 2014/15, totalling $660.2 million, an increase of 15 per cent over the previous year's budget of $582.9 million. Previously, the Government had adjusted its budget from $559 million to $464 million, reflecting a reduction of nearly 17 per cent. The Legislature increased the budget, claiming to find additional revenue. During the

legislative review, legislators attempted to include line items such as funds for their districts' development and a signature bonus in the amount of $25 million for the anticipated sale of oil blocks; the President vetoed the latter.

# III. Development of national security and justice capacities

## A. Security transition

40. The Security Council in resolutions 2190 (2014) and 2215 (2015) set 30 June 2016 as the deadline for the Government of Liberia to fully assume its complete security responsibilities from UNMIL. On 6 March 2015, the National Security Council endorsed the Government of Liberia Plan for UNMIL Transition, which was developed under the leadership of the Minister of Justice, with UNMIL support, and in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including national security agencies, various ministries, the Legislature, the judiciary and civil society. The plan, which includes specific benchmarks and a summary of activities with timelines, reflects principles set out in the Agenda for Transformation and the National Security Strategy, including the need to engage communities, improve sustained operational effectiveness, reduce corruption, and increase public confidence by addressing the oversight, accountability, professionalism and legitimacy of the security sector. Anticipating limitations in the availability of national budgetary allocations to support the implementation of the plan, which is estimated at approximately $105 million, the Government has planned a further prioritization of activities.

## B. National security strategy and architecture

41. Implementation of the 2011 National Security and Reform Act continued with the merger of the National Bureau of Investigation into the Liberia National Police and of the Ministry of National Security into the National Security Agency. Meanwhile, the draft police act, which would reform and further professionalize the police service, including improved recruitment and promotion systems, stronger oversight mechanisms, and insulating the police from political interference, is before the Minister of Justice, who is conducting a further review before resubmitting the draft act to the President.

42. During the Ebola crisis, the work of the three operational county security councils, in Nimba, Lofa and Grand Gedeh Counties, was suspended. Driven primarily by county-level government initiative, with support from the UNMIL field office, a county security council was established in Rivercess County on 9 March 2015, and district security councils were established thereafter in five of the eight districts.

43. On 13 November, the Legislature adopted separate acts on controlled drugs and substances, amending the Drug Enforcement Agency Act, as well as an act ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty signed in 2013. On the same day, the President approved the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act which, once adopted by the Legislature, would provide the only regulatory framework concerning firearms in Liberia other than the United Nations arms embargo. Meanwhile, UNMIL firearms inspections continued as authorized by the Security Council in resolution 1683 (2006). Inspections conducted in November 2014 and February 2015 revealed that

some national security agencies, including the Armed Forces of Liberia, possessed weapons not marked in line with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) standards. In March, UNMIL, in coordination with partners, facilitated a training of trainers for 29 national law enforcement and security personnel on arms marking and weapons management.

44. Progress was made in developing capacity within the Transnational Crime Unit, through the provision of specialized technical support by UNMIL. However, lack of prioritization of transnational organized crime issues within the security sector, evidenced by almost 16 months of inactivity on the part of the Unit's management board and the lack of adequate and dedicated funds from the national budget, continues to constitute a major impediment for the Unit's effective development.

## C. Liberia National Police

45. As at 15 April, the strength of the Liberia National Police stood at 4,904 personnel, including 135 officers integrated from the National Bureau of Investigation, of whom 18 per cent are women. Deployment remains limited beyond Montserrado County, which has 77.3 per cent of personnel. A project for the decentralization of the police professional standards division is being implemented with the support of UNMIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

46. From 29 to 31 January, the Liberia National Police, supported by UNMIL and UNDP, conducted a self-assessment exercise, which found the police's overall capability to be "emerging". Recommendations from the assessment have been taken forward by the police, with UNMIL support, into the formulation of a development framework and a strategic plan, aiming at coordinating and prioritizing capacity-building and development initiatives. Key recommendations include the need for the police to enhance community engagement, investigative capacities, coordination with other criminal justice system actors, and transparency in financial management.

47. The self-assessment exercise also identified the importance of insulating the police from political interference as a priority, including by reforming the existing system of appointments of senior leaders, particularly in the light of allegations of criminal activity and misconduct by senior police officers. It also placed strong emphasis on oversight mechanisms, accountability and discipline across police ranks, following reports of police harassment and brutality. Concerns relating to police conduct have been raised by the House of Representatives, both in December 2014 and in February 2015, and by the public. For example, on 27 September, approximately one thousand people demonstrated in Monrovia to protest at the alleged shooting of a civilian by the national police the previous night.

48. Owing to the Ebola outbreak, training of new police recruits was suspended and the deployment of 291 graduates was delayed. The police training academy shifted its activities to support the Ebola response and, with the support of UNMIL and other partners, provided training to 994 law enforcement officers, of whom 231 were women, on Ebola awareness and human rights. In preparation for senatorial elections, 1,081 law enforcement officers received electoral security training. On

29 March, the training of 314 Liberia National Police and 101 Drug Enforcement Agency recruits began at the police training academy.

## D. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

49. As at 15 April, the strength of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization stood at 2,097 personnel with the recent integration of 16 staff from the former Ministry of National Security, of whom 31 per cent are women. In February, the Bureau, supported by UNMIL and UNDP, conducted a self-assessment exercise to evaluate its capacity to take over security by mid-2016. Recommendations included reviewing part of the legal framework, including with respect to aliens and nationality, while also strengthening investigative capacity and improving the salaries and conditions of personnel. Greater coordination between key stakeholders of the criminal justice sector and transparency in financial management were also identified as priorities.

50. Progress was made towards the conversion of the former UNMIL camp in Foya, Lofa County, into a Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization training facility, with the release, in February, by the Government of $675,000 out of the $1.3 million approved budget. Meanwhile, UNMIL completed a quick-impact project to build four classrooms at the site. Efforts to professionalize the Bureau continued, with an additional quick-impact project aiming at enhancing the managerial and administrative skills of 40 senior and mid-level managers. However, the Ebola crisis demonstrated the risks associated with porous borders and poorly manned border crossing points. There is a significant mismatch between the existing capacity of the Bureau and its mandated tasks, which calls for increased support and attention.

## E. Judicial, legal and corrections institutions

51. Fearing an Ebola outbreak among the prison population, early in August the Chief Justice and the Minister of Justice directed judicial officials to make full use of legal provisions allowing for alternatives to incarceration, and called for a systematic review of all pretrial detention cases in order to decongest corrections facilities. A task force was established to facilitate the review of pretrial detention cases, and a system of plea bargaining was also launched. Those measures resulted in the release of approximately 250 detainees from Monrovia Central Prison charged with non-violent and minor crimes. As at 15 April, the pretrial detainee population was 69 per cent, down from the pre-Ebola rate of 74 per cent.

52. The Government also implemented successful measures to prevent the spread of Ebola in correctional facilities. However, health teams stopped visiting prison facilities in all counties except Maryland for the duration of the crisis. Without the support of international partners, the spread of other communicable diseases in prisons could have aggravated the public health crisis.

53. During the Ebola outbreak, service providers already deployed in the Gbarnga, Zwedru and Harper justice and security hubs, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, continued their work but construction of infrastructure in the second and third hubs did not start and the further deployment of service providers to those hubs was delayed until February 2015. However, implementation of the infrastructure

component had still not begun as at 15 April. The Government has committed $500,000 for the 2014/15 fiscal year, in addition to the funds provided by the Peacebuilding Fund, to support the construction of the Harper and Zwedru hubs, and is expected to provide an additional $500,000 in 2015/16. However, the Government allocations for the 2014/15 fiscal year are significantly lower than the allocations for 2013/14. The Minister of Justice is exploring options to accelerate the deployment of security personnel and delivery of services throughout the country.

54. Insecurity at correctional facilities remained a concern, with 18 escape incidents recorded during the reporting period, a 33 per cent increase from the same period in 2013/14. Inmates have been using different tactics including manipulating the fear of Ebola in order to escape.

### F. Armed Forces of Liberia

55. As at 15 April, the Armed Forces of Liberia stood at 1,835 personnel. In August, the Armed Forces of Liberia were deployed in the framework of the state of emergency, invoking for the first time the 2014 National Defence Strategy. However, following the incident at West Point referred to in paragraphs 21 and 33 above, the lack of coordination and communication among security agencies, as well as the lack of experience of the armed forces in addressing civil disorder were revealed. Shortly thereafter, the Government committed itself not to use lethal force in responding to security incidents related to the epidemic and shifted the primary responsibility for the maintenance of public order from the Armed Forces of Liberia to the Liberia National Police.

56. Liberia continued to contribute a platoon to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

## IV. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

### A. Military component

57. As at 15 April, UNMIL military strength stood at 4,415 personnel, including 176 women, against an authorized strength of 4,811. The military component includes a force headquarters in Monrovia, three infantry battalions deployed in Monrovia and at the borders with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, and a battalion-sized quick-reaction force based in Monrovia, with two forward deployed companies and enablers.

58. By its resolution 2215 (2015), the Security Council authorized the resumption of the drawdown of UNMIL that had been suspended while Ebola presented a threat to the peace and stability of Liberia. In accordance with the Council's decision that UNMIL should achieve a new authorized military strength of 3,590 by September 2015, UNMIL will withdraw 1,221 military personnel, including the force quick-reaction unit (650 troops), two engineering units (361 personnel), a military hospital (60 personnel), transport elements (50 personnel), aviation elements (43 personnel), staff officers (29) and military observers (28).

## B. Police component

59. As at 15 April, UNMIL police strength stood at 1,466 personnel, including 228 women, out of an authorized strength of 1,795 personnel, comprising 498 police, immigration and corrections advisers and 10 formed police units. Eight formed police units are deployed in the country, including three in Monrovia, and one each in Gbarnga, Greenville, Voinjama, Tubmanburg and Zwedru. Pursuant to resolution 2215 (2015), the authorized strength of the UNMIL police component is to be reduced to 1,515 by September 2015, reflecting the eight formed police units deployed in the country.

## C. Civilian component

60. As at 15 April, 1,412 civilian personnel, including United Nations Volunteers, were serving with UNMIL, out of a budgeted total of 1,621. In total, 23.6 per cent of the civilian personnel were women, including 27 per cent of 514 substantive staff and 21.5 per cent of 898 administrative staff.

## D. Conduct and discipline

61. UNMIL continued outreach to community and Mission personnel about United Nations standards of conduct, including my zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, and procedures to report misconduct. From 1 August to 15 April, 11 allegations of serious misconduct were reported, including one incident of sexual exploitation and abuse.

## E. Security and safety of United Nations personnel

62. The security situation for United Nations personnel remained stable but fragile; the emphasis during the period under review was placed on mitigating the risk of exposure to Ebola through additional safety and security measures, as well as ensuring access to medical treatment. UNMIL conducted Ebola awareness and prevention training for 2,237 peacekeepers, including 379 women. The Mission also worked closely with national and international health partners to ensure that vigorous preventive protocols were established and that any United Nations personnel diagnosed with Ebola would receive the most adequate medical care available. However, despite this vigilance, four UNMIL staff members contracted Ebola, two of whom died. Despite tensions at the community level due to the Ebola outbreak, no serious security incident affecting humanitarian workers was recorded during the period.

63. A total of 21 non-weapons-related crimes were committed against United Nations personnel, and nine staff members suffered minor injuries as a result of road traffic accidents. Two UNMIL personnel died as a result of a knife injury and a vehicle accident, respectively, and one United Nations police officer committed suicide.

# V. Observations

64. During the past year, the people of Liberia endured the national tragedy of Ebola with resilience and dignity, even as the epidemic posed perhaps the gravest threat the country has faced since the civil wars. The human toll of the epidemic far exceeds the statistics of the dead, sick and orphaned: Ebola ruptured basic aspects of life — the ability to move and interact freely, to send children to school, to comfort the sick and dying, and to bury the dead in accordance with tradition. Ebola devastated the health care system and led to the deployment of the army to enforce quarantines in civilian areas, triggering violence and the death of 15-year-old Shaki Kamara. Ebola threatened to reverse all that Liberia had achieved since the war ended in 2003. And yet Liberia remains stable, a testament to the determination and commitment of the people and Government of Liberia to defeat this threat, with the support of national and international partners.

65. In spite of the public health emergency, Liberia held senatorial elections. I wish to commend the National Elections Commission for conducting free, fair, transparent and safe elections, in consultation with all stakeholders despite considerable pre-elections tension. This success bodes well for the general and presidential elections in 2017, as public trust in the electoral body is crucial for stability.

66. Ebola has subsided in Liberia, the last case being diagnosed on 20 March. The people and Government of Liberia are now resuming the hard work of transforming their nation. The epidemic revealed the depth of challenges about which I have expressed concern for years, including the public distrust in the Government and national institutions, whose weaknesses, particularly in the health and security sectors, were exposed with tragic effect. It further revealed the problems inherent in an overly centralized government providing limited services to the population, as well as difficulties in the financial management of public sector projects. Ultimately, the Ebola crisis exposed how fragile Liberia still remains. But it also revealed the agency of those with little statutory power — county, local and traditional authorities, communities and civil society — who demonstrated their determination in tackling Ebola. County health teams, often with minimal funding, played a crucial role in aiding the sick. In the post-Ebola period, the Government must prioritize efforts to restore the confidence of the citizens it serves, taking stock of the lessons learned, addressing the factors that contributed to the spread of Ebola and the wider impact of the epidemic and building on this opening for transformation of the nation.

67. For too long, national reconciliation efforts were not given the necessary priority, while concerns about corruption, impunity, nepotism and cronyism went largely unheeded. I therefore urge the people and Government of Liberia to bring a renewed sense of urgency to the critical work of transforming the social and institutional fabric of the nation by taking forward national reconciliation initiatives, as well as implementing measures to build trust in the use of public revenues. There is now a new opportunity to build a fully unified, reconciled nation with a well-functioning accountable government committed to addressing corruption within its own ranks, and where all citizens share the benefits of Liberia's abundant natural resources. I welcome the President's expression of commitment to taking on corruption, including measures to enhance prosecution for corruption-related

crimes, which will be even more critical in managing post-Ebola recovery and development projects.

68. Transforming Liberia and shoring up the hard-won stability for the long term will also require that the people and Government of Liberia redouble their commitment to undertaking crucial political reforms processes in an inclusive manner. The ongoing constitutional review is a process that must provide all Liberians the opportunity to help articulate a shared vision for their nation, fully reflecting its rich ethnic and religious diversity. I urge greater civic engagement in the next steps of the constitutional review process and prior to the national referendum, including the broad spectrum of Liberian society such as women and youth organizations, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, the private sector and community leaders.

69. Engaging communities in decision-making processes is central to national reconciliation, and I am encouraged by the Government's revived interest in decentralization, which could facilitate social inclusion, address structural inequalities and enhance governance. I welcome the launch of the Government's Deconcentration Platform and the President's interest in advancing decentralization in regard to post-Ebola recovery planning. I am also encouraged by the support of bilateral partners and encourage the Government to dedicate adequate resources for the success of the community-based structures under the Platform.

70. Security Council resolutions 2190 (2014) and 2215 (2015) set 30 June 2016 as the deadline for the Government of Liberia to fully assume its security responsibilities from UNMIL, as I recommended in my report of 15 August 2014. At this juncture, it is important that government institutions prioritize their ability to provide basic guarantees — of security, services and protection — for its citizens. I therefore welcome the efforts by the Government in this regard, including the elaboration of a comprehensive plan for accelerating the security transition, as well as self-assessment exercises conducted by the Liberia National Police and the Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization aimed at identifying institutional weaknesses and areas for improvement. At the same time, I remain concerned by public complaints about police brutality, including claims of harassment against the media, which have a crucial role to play in a democratic society. Public trust in the police and other national institutions is essential to the success of the security transition and will be facilitated by accountability and enhanced professionalism. UNMIL and other partners stand ready to support a successful transition. However, the process must be nationally driven, with the full commitment of the entire Government, and appropriate national resources allocated for its success and sustainability. Meanwhile, UNMIL will take forward its drawdown as detailed in paragraphs 58 and 59 above, and I intend to include in my next report considerations for how the Mission could be further streamlined as requested in resolution 2215 (2015).

71. Reform processes are integral to the security transition. Accountability, transparency, integrity and increased professionalism, based on legislative and normative frameworks that define the independence of the rule of law and security institutions, are critical elements of a well-functioning law enforcement apparatus. Oversight mechanisms are also essential and, in that regard, I reiterate my concerns about the delay in the adoption of the police act. I also, once again, urge the Government of Liberia to decentralize and increase the presence of the national

police and its enabling services, as well as community engagement, beyond Montserrado County.

72. The violent clash between the community of West Point and the Armed Forces of Liberia in August raised serious concerns about the potential for a serious and destabilizing deterioration of the security situation. Security actors must act in accordance with Liberia's human rights obligations. As with other security actors, individual accountability for soldiers, including under criminal law, is essential, as are the legal and institutional frameworks for achieving accountability, including the early adoption of the police act and a uniform code of military justice. I am encouraged that, in the aftermath of the tragic events at West Point, the Government appears to have seized on critical lessons regarding the roles of the army and the police. Recent calls for the army to engage in civic works should be given positive consideration.

73. A successful security transition will also require that Liberia develop strengthened justice and corrections institutions. While I was encouraged by progress made in reducing pretrial detention during the Ebola outbreak, I am concerned that those gains seem to be eroding as the epidemic is brought under control. I urge all relevant stakeholders to sustain their resolve with respect to addressing underlying causes of delays in the criminal justice system.

74. At the same time, I remain concerned by the persistence of human rights violations, including the high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence and impunity for such crimes, and also by harmful traditional practices, in particular female genital mutilation and forced initiation into secret societies. In that regard, I urge the Government to make progress in taking forward outstanding recommendations of the universal periodic review with respect to addressing female genital mutilation and outlawing the death penalty. It is equally important that Liberia's institution responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, is empowered with the resources and other support needed to enhance its capacity to handle public complaints and engage effectively in national processes with significant human rights implications such as constitutional reform. We also must not overlook the humanitarian challenges that remain in the post-Ebola period. Survivors still need medical and psychosocial care. With high unemployment and depleted savings, vulnerable households in Liberia are hard-pressed to pay the costs for reopened schools.

75. While the suspension of land border crossing activities was a logical measure to prevent the further spread of Ebola, the absence of effective cross-border coordination mechanisms related to Ebola in the Mano River Union countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone resulted in challenges, including the inability to institute harmonized health screening protocols and measures along the borders. Suspension of border security cooperation between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire risked contributing to a security vacuum in the border areas. Among the many lessons revealed by Ebola is the importance of resilient regional mechanisms, not only for health emergencies but also for other shocks and challenges. I therefore welcome the resumption of the quadripartite and tripartite frameworks, and call on the countries of the region to assume greater ownership of their bilateral and regional cooperation.

76. As Ebola continues to decrease, with the support of many valiant national and international partners, too numerous to name, we must guard against complacency or fatigue, and continue providing strong support to the people and Governments of the affected countries until the subregion is free of Ebola. Liberia and the other affected countries will also require considerable assistance in rebuilding health systems devastated by the Ebola epidemic. It is important to look to the future, building on the determination and resilience of the people of Liberia in our collective efforts to support post-Ebola national healing and recovery. This is a moment of potential transformation for Liberia, which we all must seize.

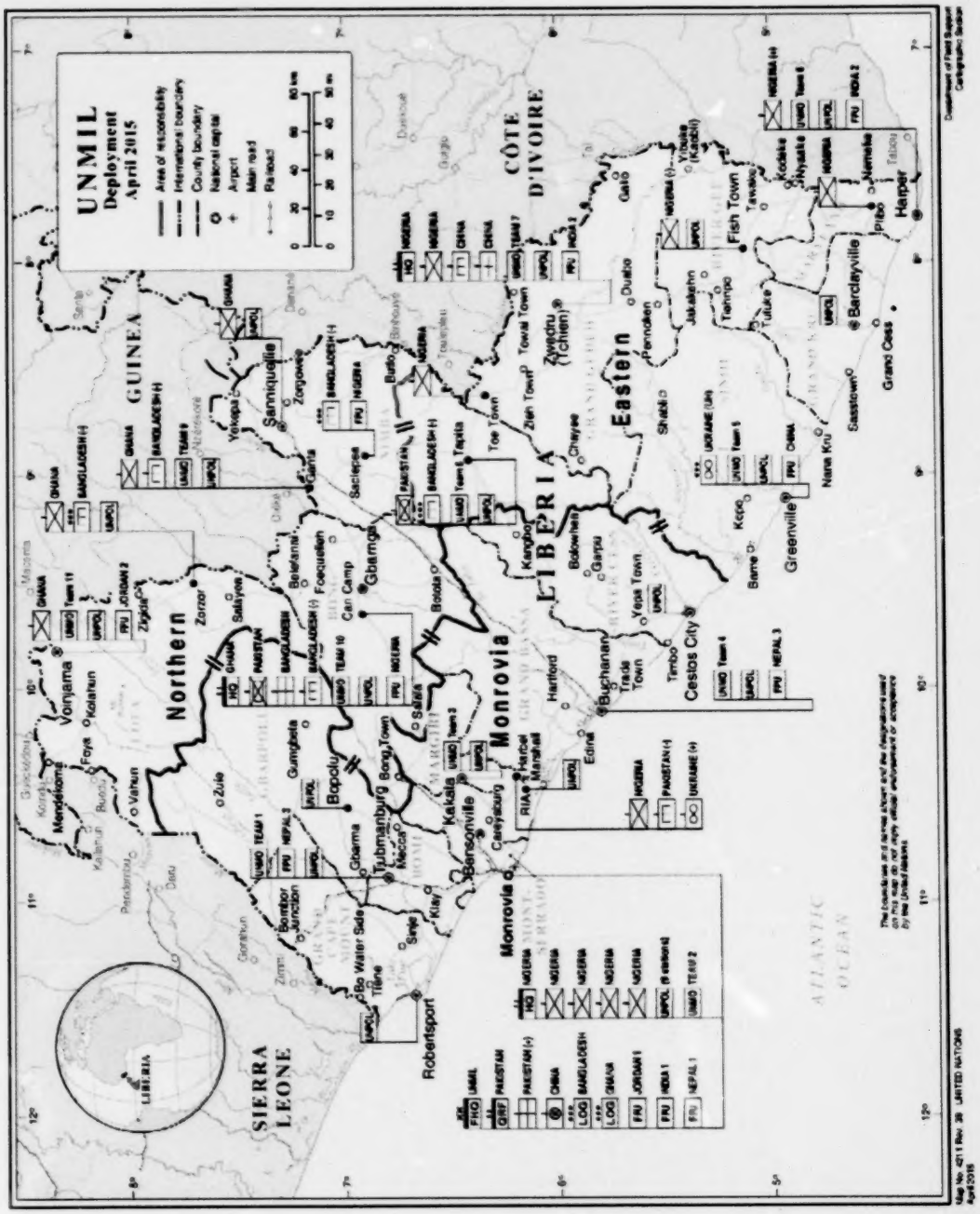
77. In conclusion, I wish to thank my Special Representative for Liberia, Karin Landgren, as well as all United Nations personnel, for their dedication to sustaining peace and stability in Liberia, and for staying the course throughout the Ebola epidemic. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, other regional and subregional organizations, multilateral and bilateral development partners, the Peacebuilding Commission, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and non-governmental organizations for their continuing commitment and contributions to peace, security and development in Liberia. Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude for the selfless and extraordinary contribution made by the national and international health workers and other responders, particularly those who lost their lives, in responding to the Ebola outbreak.

# Annex

## United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength as at 15 April 2015

| | *Military component* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Country* | *Military observers* | *Staff officers* | *Troops* | *Total* | *Formed police units* | *Police officers* |
| Argentina | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 8 |
| Bangladesh | 13 | 8 | 509 | 530 | | 31 |
| Benin | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 |
| Bhutan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 6 |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 11 |
| Brazil | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 |
| Bulgaria | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| China | 2 | 8 | 558 | 568 | 140 | 19 |
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Denmark | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 | | 0 |
| Ecuador | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 |
| Egypt | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | | 5 |
| El Salvador | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Ethiopia | 9 | 5 | 0 | 14 | | 0 |
| Fiji | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 6 |
| Finland | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| France | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | | 0 |
| Gambia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 19 |
| Germany | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 5 |
| Ghana | 13 | 10 | 700 | 723 | | 30 |
| India | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 245 | 12 |
| Indonesia | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 0 |
| Jamaica | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Jordan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 237 | 16 |
| Kenya | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 26 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | | 3 |
| Lithuania | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 |
| Malaysia | 6 | 1 | 0 | 7 | | 0 |
| Mali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Mongolia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Montenegro | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Namibia | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | | 9 |

| Country | Military component | | | | Formed police units | Police officers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Military observers | Staff officers | Troops | Total | | |
| Nepal | 2 | 3 | 15 | 20 | 260 | 33 |
| Niger | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| Nigeria | 8 | 4 | 1 370 | 1 382 | 120 | 36 |
| Norway | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 11 |
| Pakistan | 9 | 9 | 897 | 915 | | 0 |
| Paraguay | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| Peru | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Philippines | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Poland | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| Republic of Korea | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | | 3 |
| Republic of Moldova | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 0 |
| Romania | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 3 |
| Russian Federation | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | | 6 |
| Rwanda | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 4 |
| Samoa | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Senegal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Serbia | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | | 6 |
| Sri Lanka | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 25 |
| Sweden | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 15 |
| Switzerland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 |
| Thailand | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 |
| Togo | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 |
| Turkey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 11 |
| Uganda | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 16 |
| Ukraine | 3 | 2 | 174 | 179 | | 19 |
| United States of America | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 | | 2 |
| Uruguay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 2 |
| Yemen | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | | 11 |
| Zambia | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 22 |
| Zimbabwe | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | | 30 |
| **Total** | **121** | **71** | **4 223** | **4 415** | **1 002** | **464** |


UNMIL
Deployment
April 2015
Area of responsibility
International boundary
County boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
Railroad
LIBERIA
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Northern
Eastern
Monrovia
Robertsport
Bo Waterside
Tiene
Sinje
Kiru
Tubmanburg
Bopolu
Gbarma
Zorzor
Voinjama
Kolahun
Vahun
Foya
Mendekoma
Zuie
Gumgbota
Bong Town
Sanniquellie
Ganta
Saclepea
Gbarnga
Kakata
Bensonville
Careysburg
Harper
Buchanan
Greenville
Zwedru
Fish Town
Barclayville
Sasstown
Grand Cess
Nana Kru
Cestos City
Yeapa Town
Kanplay
Bolahun
Ganta
Toe Town
Zleh Town
Towai Town
Duoplay
Gbapa
Duoke
Gato
Pennoken
Jukajahn
Tchien
Tuduke
Kpor
Barne
Shiaplay
Bolowhein
Harford
Edina
Trade Town
Yeas Town
Tchien
Nimba
Sinoe
Grand Kru
Maryland
Rivercess
Grand Gedeh
Kru Coast
Atlantic Ocean